

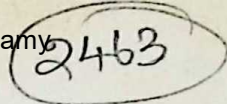
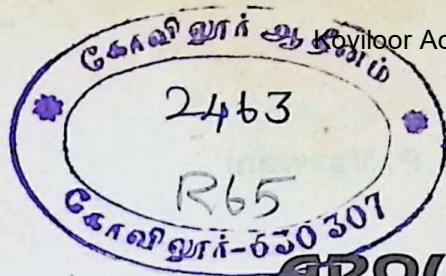
Koviloor Academy

AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE

Questions you have always wished to ask

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J. P. VASWANI



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AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE

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Other Books by J.P. Vaswani

From Hell to Heaven
Tear-Drops (Poems)
Pictures and Parables
Glimpses
Whispers
A Child of God
You Are Not Alone!
A Day With Dadaji
The Kingdom of Krishna
Out of Darkness Into Light
A Mystic of Modern India
Doors of Heaven
Love and Laugh!
The Story of a Simple Man
Beloved Dadaji
Conversations with Dadaji
Feast of Love
Shanti Speaks
Glimpses Into Great Lives
Education : What India Needs
Life After Death
How to Have Real Fun Out of Life and Other Talks
Notes from the Master's Lute
Chitra Darshan (Hindi)
Stories for Meditation
Little Lamps
How to Overcome Tensions
How to Make Your Life a Love-Story
Daily Appointment With God
Begin The Day With God

Editors' Note

In this age of many distractions, nothing seems to fulfil our real need and give us the joy we seek. And to spread the sunshine of true love and joy, peace and harmony, Dada J.P. Vaswani went on a *yatra* to Western Countries in February 1984.

Face wreathed in perpetual smiles, and draped in a shawl of utter humility, Dada J.P. Vaswani endeared himself to all who met him. His sparkling wit and rich humour, and his natural attractiveness and loveliness drew not only men and women, but even teenagers and children to him.

Among other programmes held, the Question-Answer Sessions were some of the most interesting, informal yet elevating sessions that were very popular among the people in all the places that Dada visited. At a number of such sessions, one of the questions asked was about how Dada always kept a "million-dollar smile" on his face all the time. They said they felt so light and gay merely by being in his presence.

In this book have been brought together, a selection of questions asked by various people, specially the youth, at Question-Answer Sessions and by reporters in their interviews for the T.V. and the radio. Some of the questions were posed by Mr. Bob Gurbani who took Dada all over the States. They were telecast over various stations to introduce Dada J.P Vaswani and his teachings to the American public.

Dada believes that listening without reflecting is like eating without digesting. The youths of today will not conceal their doubts and difficulties, but are filled with a sense of strong search and are not persons of unthinking trust. The keenest and subtlest mind can get a rational answer from him. Just as a single sunbeam is enough to drive away all shadows, a simple yet practical answer from him will dispel many doubts.

Questions regarding religion and its relevance in modern times, Indian Culture and the teachings of Saints and Sages, prayer and meditation, generation gap and home-building (or breaking) and other problems faced by them were asked and promptly answered. The answers, in many cases, were well garnished by amusing anecdotes and stories.

The youth and specially the intelligentsia were heard exclaiming that this was one of the rare instances when they were satisfied with and convinced by the answers, which they felt were so down to earth and true.

We sanguinely hope that this book will prove invaluable for anyone with even a passing interest in the spiritual path.

**Piya G. Uttam
Krishna Kumari
Editors**

YOU CAN BE A SMILE-MILLIONAIRE

QUESTION:— Dada, there is always this million-dollar smile on your face. What is the secret?

ANSWER:— The secret is a simple one. I seek to live as a little child: a child who knows that its mother is near and it has naught to fear. No mother would wish to bring her child to harm. And so, in everything that happens,—in every incident and accident, every illness and adversity,—there is a meaning of the Divine Mother's mercy. She is All-Love and All-Wisdom. She is too loving to punish, too wise to make a mistake. And so nothing can ever go wrong. All is well, as all was well and will ever be well, both tomorrow and a hundred years hence. The person who believes in this, will always continue to smile the smile of bliss. The secret of the care-free life is,—walk with God today, and trust Him for the morrow!

Of course, it is the Divine Mother's grace that holds me. I shall continue to smile only as long as Her grace holds me,

upholds me. If She were to withdraw Her grace even for a moment, I would crash and be broken into bits.

My Beloved Master [Sadhu Vaswani] always had a radiant smile on his lips. When they asked him the reason, he said:—"I have a Friend. He protects me. He guards me in illness. He blesses me everyday. And He stretches forth His Arms of Love to enfold me in silence and darkness of the night. He is your Friend, too. Indeed, He is the Friend of friends!"

Sadhu Vaswani's smile was the smile of one who felt the joy of God's presence all the time. It is a joy which is open to each one of us. Each one of us can become a smile-millionaire.

QUESTION:— Why is it that we cannot smile all the time?

ANSWER:— It is because we are afflicted with the disease of desire. When our desires are fulfilled, we smile. When our desires are crossed, we feel miserable and unhappy. When we are in a neutral state,—neither happy nor unhappy,—we feel bored. It is only when we transcend these three states that we are filled with peace,—the peace that passeth, surpasseth understanding.

QUESTION:— What may a man do to have that million-dollar smile all the time?

ANSWER:— When the heart of man is filled with the love of God and love of the suffering children of God, his face always wears a divine smile. Such a man carries the joy and peace of God, wherever he goes.

Practice of the presence of God

QUESTION:— I have to do my work the whole day long. What may I do to attain this stage?

ANSWER:— All we have to do is to keep our mind centred in God. Let us practise the presence of God all the time. Let our hands be busy doing work, but let the thought of God be in the background of our consciousness all the time. So let us offer all our work to the Lord. Let every beat of our heart sing the song, “*To vāstay! To vāstay!*” “Lord, let us do everything for Thy sake.”

The heart that remembers God is ever alive. The hearts of so many of us, alas! are dead. We are dead souls. We can enliven our hearts by remembering God and by loving Him. Again and again, in the midst of our work, let us pause for a brief while and breathe out a simple prayer such as:—“Love Divine! be Thou not from me afar!” Or a prayer such as:—“I love you, God! I want to love you, more and more! I want to love you more than anything in the world! I want to love you to distraction, to intoxication. Grant me pure love and devotion for Thy Lotus-feet, and so bless me that this world-bewitching *māyā* may not lead me astray!”

QUESTION:— Can outer conditions affect such a smile?

ANSWER:— No; the divine, blissful smile does not depend on outer conditions. It is there within us. It is within each one of us. We do not have to acquire it; we have but to regain it. We have lost it for the time being, because we have identified ourselves with our bodies, our senses. We have come to believe that there can be no joy in life without sense-indulgence, sense-gratification.

QUESTION:— A little while ago, you uttered the words, “*To vāstay! To vāstay!*” They are so beautiful. Tell us something more about them.

ANSWER:— The man who utters these words with every beat of his heart is the one who has handed over his life in *child like* trust to the Lord. He realises that he is only an instrument: the worker is God. In every little thing he does, he breathes out the aspiration:—“Not mine, but Thine be the glory, O Lord!”

There is a moving story of an artist who painted pictures of fascinating beauty, but not one of them bore his name. A friend said to him:—“Your pictures draw so many: they are admired by all who see them. Why is it that you do not put your name on them?” In answer, the artist led his friend to a corner of the studio, where was kept a wonderful, beautiful picture of the Lord. Underneath the picture were the words:—“May my pictures draw many unto Thee, O Lord! But may my name be forgotten!” Pointing to those words, the artist said:—“Here is an answer to your question.” The artist did his work in the spirit of “*To vāstay! To vāstay!*” And on his face there was always a blissful smile, for in his heart there was the divine joy of God.

Three-fold Formula

QUESTION:— People are caught up in the strain and stress of modern life. Do you have an easy formula to draw them to the best of values which you have indicated, again and again, in your talks and lectures?

ANSWER:— The formula is a three-fold one. Firstly, we must be careful to see that we always have a constructive, a positive attitude towards life. By positive attitude, I do not

mean that life does not have a negative side. Life does have a negative, a dark side. Life is full of difficulties and dangers, trials and tribulations. But the man with the positive approach refuses to dwell on the negative side of life. Surrounded by the most adverse conditions, he will look for a place to stand on. Conditions all around him may be frustrating, but he will not give up. He will continue to expect the best results. And this is an inviolable law of life: what you expect persistently comes rushing to you. We only draw to ourselves that which we think of all the time. Our thoughts are magnets. Through our thoughts we draw to ourselves conditions and circumstances of which we keep on thinking all the time.

Always have a constructive, positive approach to life. There is a picture I saw many years ago. It is a picture of two buckets, each half filled with water. Outside one bucket there was the picture of a face with a frown and underneath were written the words:—"Of what use is it to be half empty all the time?" Outside the other bucket, there was the picture of a face with a smile and underneath were the words:—"I feel grateful to God that I am at least half full all the time!" The two buckets symbolise the negative and the positive attitudes towards life. The man with the negative attitude wears a frown on his face. He is resentful and morose. He feels rejected, unwanted. He is never happy. He cannot face the stress and strain of life in the right spirit. The man with the positive attitude wears a smile on his face, is always cheerful, buoyant, full of energy. He has the strength to face the difficulties and dangers of life, in the right spirit.

The second point in the formula is, we must not offer resistance to life. Life has given us many things. Some of them are good: some of them are not as good. I must accept them all and make the most of them. Of course, I

must not be fatalistic. I must not take things lying down. But if, in spite of my best efforts, I am not able to achieve the desired results, I must accept the situation. Acceptance is not a passive thing. To accept truly is to accept in joy. To accept is to triumph over the circumstances and not let them touch the joy and peace of the soul. Resistance, inevitably, leads to wastage of energy, which could be used to constructive ends. Do your very best to achieve the desired results, but if in spite of your efforts you fail, let that not depress you. The Great Cosmic Power that controls the universe knows better what is good for you. So accept, and rejoice!

The third point in the formula is that we must always see the good in others. If a brother has nine virtues and one fault, let us think of his nine qualities and forget the one fault. If a brother has nine faults and one virtue, let us consider his one virtue and forget the nine faults. That which we see in others has a knack of getting into us. If we consider the faults of others, they will, in due course, become part of our nature.

QUESTION:- If we follow the pattern suggested by you, people will take advantage of us.

ANSWER:- We live in an open universe. No one can take advantage of another. Each gets only what belongs to him.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

QUESTION:– What is the purpose of your visit to the **West**?

ANSWER:– In my mind, there are no distinctions of West or East. Both belong to the One Heavenly Father's Home. I love to think of the whole Earth as my country, and to do good as my religion. I am a pilgrim. In the spirit of a pilgrim, I move on, from place to place. I go wherever the Will of God takes me. I go in quest of fellow-pilgrims in whose hearts there may be love for spiritual things, longing for the Unseen.

QUESTION:– Tell me, Dada, who is a pilgrim?

ANSWER:– A pilgrim is one who moves on unhastingly, unrestingly to his goal. He is attached to nothing, to no one. He knows that nothing, no one belongs to him. He belongs to the Lord.

QUESTION:– What do you think is the goal of a pilgrim?

ANSWER:– The goal is God. He is not afar. He does not

dwell on a distant star. He is wherever we are. He is here and He is now.

I am reminded of an amusing incident in the life of my Beloved Master, my revered Gurudeva, Sadhu Vaswani. We love to call him, Beloved Dada. One day there came to him a University man and said:—"Dada, you talk of God. But where is God? God is nowhere."

And Beloved Dada said to him:—"Write those words on a piece of paper."

The words were written, "God is nowhere".

And Dada drew a line between the 'w' and 'h' of nowhere, and asked the University man to read what was written. He read:—God is now here. Yes, God is now and God is here. For He is our real Self, our true Self, our Higher, nobler, larger Self. Indeed, as the Bhagavad Gita says, He is the Self Supreme.

QUESTION:— Tell us something more about God, the Self Supreme of us all.

ANSWER:— God is the Source of all Supply. God is the Source of Truth and Beauty and Goodness, of Love and Joy, of Prosperity and Peace, of Health and Happiness and Harmony. He is the Source of all that man is seeking. And He is within us. In our quest we wander outside of ourselves. All we have to do is to turn within! True success belongs to the man who has found God. The man who has everything that the world can give but who does not have God,—his heart is restless.

QUESTION:— Is this the reason why restlessness is growing in the world from more to more?

ANSWER:- Yes, that is just the reason why the world is growing in restlessness from more to more. We live in an age in which material comforts have grown beyond man's expectations. But material comforts have not given man true satisfaction. And civilisation, today, is sick. Those are not my words, but the words of a number of eminent thinkers, who, surveying the situation of the modern world, tell us that civilisation is sick.

Today, wherever you turn, you find there is the passion for power, the greed for gold, the lust for fame. Today, the nations are wandering in a jungle of darkness. Today, humanity stands on the brink of a precipice. Today, Mother Humanity is shedding tears, while her children are busy preparing nuclear bombs. Today, Humanity is an orphan crying in the night, crying for the light.

Turn back to God!

QUESTION:- What is the cure? Is humanity doomed to utter destruction?

ANSWER:- The cure lies in treating the cause. That distinguished Swiss Psychiatrist, Carl Jung, diagnosed the illness of the present age as alienation from God. Civilisation, he said, has become sick, because it has alienated itself from God. Man has cut himself off from God, who is the Source and Sustainer of Life. And man cannot live a healthy life,—physically, mentally, morally, spiritually. The more we turn away from God, the more we shall continue to wander, the more restless will our hearts become.

Carl Jung also said:-“It is easy enough to drive the Spirit out of the door, but when we have done so, the salt of life grows flat, and life loses its flavour.”

Life seems to have lost its flavour, today. An ever-increasing number of men and women, boys and girls, all over the world declare:—"Life is not worth living! Life has no meaning!" Today, we seem to have more and more means, but less and less meaning.

The cure lies in turning back to God. I have but one tongue. If I had a million tongues, with every one of those millions tongues, I would still say:—Turn back to God! Turn back to God!

QUESTION:— What is it to turn back to God? Does it mean that we should go to the Church or visit the Temple, everyday?

ANSWER:— No! That is not what turning back to God means. Go to the church, yes! But by turning to God is meant something different. Turning to God is knowing God. And knowing God is an experience very similar to that of knowing a dear one,—a brother, a sister, a dear friend. It is an experience very similar to that of knowing your own wife, your own husband.

You may go to the church, the temple, the mosque, everyday. You may read endless passages from the scriptures; you may visit distant places of pilgrimage; you may turn the beads of a rosary, and yet you may not know God.

To know God you must cultivate contact with Him: you must make Him *real* in your daily life. You must live and move and do your daily work in His ever-living presence. And, as I have already said, He is not from us afar. He is wherever we are. He is now, He is here! Closer is He to us than breathing, nearer than the nip of our neck. Speak to Him and He hears! Think of Him and He is before you! Call

Him and He responds! You are never alone!

QUESTION:- How interesting! And how simple it sounds! Tell us what we may do to make God's presence real in our day-to-day life.

ANSWER:- God will become real to you in the measure in which you practise silence. Everyday, sit for sometime in silence and do your spiritual thinking. Sit in silence and pray, meditate, engage yourself in an intimate and loving conversation with God.

Sit in silence, preferably, at the same time and at the same place, everyday. For this is your daily appointment with your higher Self, your True Self. And when you sit in silence, see that you are not disturbed. Even urgent messages must wait. The telephone bell must not tinkle.

Sit in silence for some time everyday. But what is more important is that you must keep on reminding yourself throughout the day that you are not alone. God is with you! In the midst of your work, pause for a while now and then, and say to yourself:-"I am not alone! God is with me! I am not alone! God is with me!" In the beginning this may be just a mechanical utterance: but, gradually, you will find it will come to life. A day will come when those words will spring out of the very depths of your heart:-"I am not alone! God is with me!" That will be a great day. God will be real to you. And you will find miracles happen in your daily life.

LOVE IS THE WAY!

QUESTION:— Dada, is it possible to contact God?

ANSWER:— Yes. The Saints of God tell us, through their personal experience, that it is possible to touch God, to feel Him, to see Him, to talk to Him and hear Him speak to us. For God is more real than the objects and forms we behold with our physical eyes.

To be able to contact God, we need to develop deep longing, yearning for Him. Yearn for the Lord, said Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, even as the miser yearns for gold, as the lover yearns for his beloved, as the child who has lost its mother yearns for her. When, under God's grace, you develop such deep yearning, you too will be able to see Him. When God gets the assurance that you need nothing besides Him, that you need neither pleasure nor possessions. nor power, He will reveal Himself to you.

QUESTION:— Dada, what is the way to God?

ANSWER:— Love is the way. Intellectual ratiocination will

not take you to Him. Roll up your intellect and place it at His Lotus-feet. Love Him with all your heart and soul and you will attain Him.

QUESTION:— Do you mean to say that mind and intellect are useless? Why, then, did God create them?

ANSWER:— The mind helps us in doing our daily work, in carrying out our respective businesses and professions. The intellect helps us in discriminating between the real and the unreal, between the true and the false. Once you know that God alone is real, all else is unreal [*Brahma satyam, jagat mithya*], the intellect has done its work. You then make God the goal of your life. The intellect is no longer necessary. And then, as I said, roll up your intellect and lay it at His Lotus-feet.

Do not try to understand God with the help of the intellect. God is unfathomable: He is the Unknown and the Unknowable. Even the Vedas cannot fathom Him. Do not seek to understand God and His ways. But love Him. Let your love for Him grow from more to more. Let your love for Him be undivided. And you will attain Him!

God speaks!

QUESTION:— Dada, how can I communicate with God?

ANSWER:— Just as you are communicating with me. The question should have been, how can I know that God is communicating with me? You can communicate with God very easily. Prayer is one way of communicating with Him. Meditation is another. God listens to the softest whisper of the human heart,—and He responds. Our tragedy is that we are unable to hear His soft, flute-like voice. Lost as we are, in

the noise and tumult of this world, we are unable to hear Him. Within us is the clash of conflicting desires, within us are storms of passion and animal appetites, and we are unable to hear God, who speaks to us softly. Before we can hear Him, we have to reach the point of stillness within us. We must enter deeper and deeper within ourselves until we touch what is called by some mystics as the neuter-point, the point of stillness. It is there that you will be able to hear the voice of God. It is there that you will be able to speak to God and hear Him speak to you.

Ask God!

QUESTION:— Dada, why did God create us?

ANSWER:— I think this is a question which only God can answer. Therefore, we must first seek to reach God. Let us endeavour to reach God, and when we have attained Him, we can put to Him this and other similar questions. But, perhaps, when we have reached God, we will find that we have no questions to ask of Him.

QUESTION:— Dada, among Hindus there are so many Gods: to whom should we offer our prayer?

ANSWER:— What is prayer? Prayer is something very simple. It is like speaking to a friend, a very dear friend. And that is what God is. He is the Friend of friends. If a friend were to come to you, it would be so natural for you to share your dreams and desires, your thoughts and aspirations, your plans and programmes,—and ask him to help you. Do likewise with God.

As regards the number of Gods, they are but different forms of the One. In the beginning was the One,—so we read

in an ancient Upanishad,—and the One bethought to Himself:—
“I am One: let Me be many!” Out of this *sankalpa*, the Universe was born. The One trod the tracks of time: the One entered the fields of space. And manifestation came into being. The One is in all. Different Gods are but different forms of the One. Go to the One who draws you, and offer your prayers to Him. He may be Sri Krishna or Buddha, Jesus or Moses, Zoroaster or Baha'u'llah, Guru Nanak or Kabir, Mira or Mahavira, or any other God-man. They are all forms of the One who is formless.

India has, through the ages, specialised in *Atma-Vidya*,—the science of the Spirit. And thus the many Gods are meant to suit the various levels of religious consciousness on which each one of us stands. India provides spiritual food for all types of temperaments, the stone-worshipper as the devotee to whom God is Formless and Absolute.

God is One: His forms may be many. To the worshipper, the form is not merely a form: to him it is the Reality he worships, the God above all gods.

Today, I meet you wearing a shawl. Tomorrow, I may come to you wearing a coat. Would you say that Dada in the coat is different from Dada in the shawl? Though Dada in shawl may appear better to some than Dada in the coat and vice versa.

India lives on!

QUESTION:— Dada, India has such a rich cultural heritage. There are so many saints born there. Why is it that the country is still in misery and poverty?

ANSWER:— India, it is true, has a very rich spiritual heritage. But how many of us in India bear witness to it in deeds of

daily living? As many do so, so many are happy, blissful, even though they may live in poverty and privation.

It is *life* that is needed, not theory. On the theoretical side, we are very strong, but the theory needs to be put into practice. So it has been said that an ounce of action is more than a ton of talk. Tons of talk we have. We have a plethora of preachers: we have so many sermons and discourses. What we need is example. What matters is not the words we speak, but the vibrations behind those words. We have the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Brahmanas, the Brahmasutras, the Puranas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana: we have the Bhagavad Gita, the Sant-bani and the Gur-bani. What we need is men and women who will put the great teachings into practice.

Sadhu Vaswani said to us:—"We are proud of the Rishis. Are the Rishis proud of us?" Yet, I believe, India will triumph, for the spirit of India is still alive. Have you ever asked yourself the question, why is it that when all other great civilizations are dead and gone, India alone lives on? Ancient Greece, which was the cradle of art and science, ancient Greece is gone, but India lives on! Ancient Rome that dreamt the dream of dominion, ancient Rome, whose eagles floated over far-off nations,—ancient Rome is gone, but India lives on. Egypt and Babylonia, Sumeria and Assyria are gone, but India lives on. India lives on, because India has a mission to fulfil in the coming days. India has to reveal to the modern nations that there can be no true freedom without spirituality. There can be no liberty, fraternity, equality without a democracy of the Spirit.

THE WORLD'S NEED

QUESTION:— What do you think is the need of Europe and America?

ANSWER:— The one need of Europe and America, as it is of India and Russia and Africa and all other countries of the world,—our one urgent need is the child-heart, the heart of the child. Of such, said Jesus, is the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of Happiness. We are becoming more and more clever,—perhaps, crafty and cunning,—in our individual, national and inter-national dealings. We wish to outwit the other person or nation. The world needs straight-forward people.

God, give us men of faith and wisdom and love, of sympathy and simplicity and service! God, give us men who have the child-heart. They will lead the nations out of darkness into light! They will usher in a new era of peace for which the wounded, the tortured soul of humanity has piteously cried through the ages.

Light your candle!

QUESTION:- Why is there such moral decay in the world?

ANSWER:- To this question there can be a variety of answers which may lead to endless and futile discussions. The fact is that there is moral decay. So let me do the little I can to dispel the darkness around me. Let me kindle, in my own life, a little candle of purity, of simplicity, selfless service. To reform the world, Sadhu Vaswani said, begin with yourself!

QUESTION:- To begin with myself, what would you advise me to do?

ANSWER:- Four things. Firstly, hand yourself over to the Lord. Turn over your life in child like trust to the Lord. Secondly, rejoice in everything that the Will of God brings to you. Whatever happens in the Divine Providence, happens for our good. So wherever God keeps me, let me remain. Wherever He sends me, let me go. Thirdly, let me spend sometime everyday in silence, in prayer, in meditation, in silent study of spiritual truths. I often refer to it as our daily appointment with God. And, fourthly, let me help others. Sadhu Vaswani said to us:-“Did you meet him on the road? Did you leave him with the load?” The day on which I have not helped a brother here, a sister there, to lift the load on the rough road of life, is a lost day indeed.

Sadhu Vaswani's Message

QUESTION:- What was the message Sadhu Vaswani wanted to convey?

ANSWER:- Sadhu Vaswani's message, in a few simple

words, is:—Love God with all your mind and heart and soul, and give the service of love to all the suffering children of God. Never forget, he added, that birds and animals and all creatures that breathe the breath of life are also God's children. Creation is one family. And in this one family of creation, birds and animals are man's younger brothers and sisters. It is the duty and responsibility of man to guard them, and protect them, take care of them, and give them the love of his unselfish heart.

These hands are given us to help and heal, not to hurt and harm. They are given us to save and not to slaughter, to bless and not to butcher. These hearts are given us to love and not to hate.

QUESTION:— Dada, what is your message to humanity?

ANSWER:— Who am I to give a message? I am but a simple man. Sometimes, they speak of me as a V.I.P. I do not object, because I tell them that I am a V.I.P. which means a "very insignificant person". I seek to tread the path of humility and love. The wisdom of the ages, the wisdom of the sages, is in this one word,—Love. Love everyone,—not only those that are good but those whom the world regards as evil. Love not only men but all creatures who breathe the breath of life. Love every ray of sunshine, every drop of water, every grain of sand. And I ask you to bless me that I may try, in my daily life, to bear witness to this teaching.

QUESTION:— Dada, has the Sadhu Vaswani Mission started a new religious cult?

ANSWER:— No. The world does not need new religious cults, but New Life. So many rites: so many creeds. What

the sad world needs is the life of sympathy and love. Sadhu Vaswani said, again and again:—"Religion? Let us *talk* of it less, *practise* more!" The emphasis of Sadhu Vaswani was on life, *not* on words, or rites, rituals, creeds, dogmas. Creeds, he said, are broken reeds and dogmas divide. But religion, true religion is *life* True religion is that which teaches us to love God and to serve the God-in-man. For within every man there dwelleth God. Every man is a living, moving temple of God. To render service to man is truly to worship God.

In all Religions, the Light is Thine!

QUESTION:- Dada, the Sadhu Vaswani Mission believes in the fellowship of races, and religions. Could you kindly tell us what is the attitude of the Mission towards religions other than Hinduism?

ANSWER:- The Mission believes in the unity of all religions and reveres the Great Ones of all Faiths. We have reverence for Krishna and also for Christ,—as for the other Great Ones of Humanity, including Buddha, Muhammed, Moses, Guru Nanak, Kabir, St. Francis, Lao Tse, Zoroaster, Baha'u'llah. The list is endless.

In all religions, taught Sadhu Vaswani, there is but one Light. In all scriptures there is but one Wisdom. In all the Saints and Prophets there is but one Inspiration. The Sadhu Vaswani Mission celebrates days sacred to the Great Ones of different religions and races. They all belong to the One Kingdom of Heaven,—the Kingdom of God.

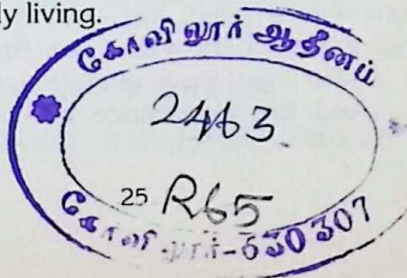
QUESTION:- Tell us something about Sadhu Vaswani,—some significant incident from his life.

ANSWER:— I could give you many moving, deeply touching incidents from the pure, gentle, love-filled life of Sadhu Vaswani. One day, as he took a walk on the roadside, he saw, someone lying underneath a tree. He was a beggar: his clothes were dirty and tattered and torn: his feet were soiled with mud. Beloved Dada [Sadhu Vaswani] asked me to bring a bucket of water. As soon as the bucket was brought, Beloved Dada,—this uncrowned king of our hearts,—he had but to lift up a finger and hundreds of us would rush to find out what his wish was,—Beloved Dada, with his own hands, washed the body of the beggar and gave him his own shirt to wear. The beggar pointed to the cap on Beloved Dada's head. Without the least hesitation, Beloved Dada passed on to the beggar his cap.

On that occasion, Beloved Dada spoke words which I can never forget. He said:—"This shirt and this cap and every thing I have, is a loan given to me to be passed on to those whose need is greater than mine."

In those words is enshrined a teaching which, if put into practice, can change the face of the world. Everything we have,—our time and talents, our knowledge and experience and wisdom, our money and possessions, our energy and enthusiasm, our influence and authority, our life itself,—is a loan given to us to be passed on to those whose need is greater than ours.

This is the ideal of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission. Not many of us have attained to it. But there is comfort in the thought that there are some, in our midst, who seek to bear witness to it in deeds of daily living.



WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

QUESTION:- Dada, tell me if God is one, why are there differences in religious philosophy?

ANSWER:- It is true, God is one. But the One is described in various ways by different people at different times. Each claims that his description is the only correct one. So there are differences and differences, in several cases, lead to discord.

There is the parable of the blind men who described what an elephant was. The one who touched the body of the elephant was sure that the elephant was a massive wall. Another who got hold of the leg of the animal claimed that the elephant was a pillar. Yet another who held his ear claimed that the elephant was a fan. And so on. Everyone was right in his own way: everyone spoke of his own experience. And the experience of every single man is limited.

God is Truth. Truth cannot be described in words. So it is that when Pontius Pilate asked Jesus:—"What is Truth?" Jesus was silent. Truth cannot be stated in words. Truth is to be *realised*.

The Law of Karma

QUESTION:— Dada, tell me what is *karma*? And is suffering the result of past *karma*, like a man who is sent to jail for breaking man-made laws?

ANSWER:— The law of *karma* is the law which declares that what you do comes back to you. The good you do persists: the evil you do will find you out! So, beware! Sow what is good, not what is evil.

The law of *karma* applies as much to individuals as to nations. If the great powers of the West will but heed this law, they will refrain from being destructive. Violence and war will no longer taint their political transactions. Build not in pride and power but build in the service of humanity,—is the one great teaching of the law of *karma* to the nations of the world.

Suffering can be the result of past *karma*, but it must not be forgotten that the law of *karma* is both just and good. The law of *karma* is not punitive: it does not punish. The law of *karma* is reformatory. At its heart, it wishes to reform, to make a person better, purer, nobler. Therefore, the law of *karma* puts an individual in an environment where he has opportunities for self-improvement.

The Value of Suffering

QUESTION:— Why is it that bad things happen to good

people, while so many who are evil, have the best of life?

ANSWER:- Bad things happen to good people that they may grow better, nobler, purer. Even as gold is burnt in the crucible to be cleansed off its dross, even so good people are chosen to burn in the fire of suffering, and so become pure as thrice-burnished gold.

Wealth and pleasures and power and honours are not as good as they seem to be. In many cases, they degrade man and make him corrupt. In our ancient books there is the suggestive story of Kunti. She had to ask for a boon. What she asked for was that she might have some little suffering all the time. In suffering, she said, the Lord is remembered; in pleasures and enjoyment, He is forgotten.

How true it is that suffering purifies! Not many know of the value of suffering. It was an Indian Saint who prayed:-“Lord, grant me starvation and sickness and suffering and ignominy!” Those are the things that are of real value to those that know.

QUESTION:- Does man get *mukti* [liberation from the cycle of birth and death] after living out his *karma*?

ANSWER:- *karma* leads to *karma*: the process of sowing and reaping goes on, endlessly. But *mukti*, liberation, comes through the grace of God. So it is that we have cases of sinners being suddenly transformed into saints. It was a Christian saint who said:-“What God is by nature, man becomes by grace.” Through grace, man becomes Godlike, emancipate, free!

Purpose of Life

QUESTION:- Dada, what is the purpose of life?

ANSWER:- The purpose of man's life is to grow in purity and perfection. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!" He who has a vision of God in the heart within, beholds God wherever he turns,—in every atom of an atom. And he makes the discovery that though God dwells within man, men know it not and so are unhappy. And he says to himself:—"I shall be a servant of all who suffer and are in pain!" The purpose of life is that it may be poured out as a sacrifice on the altar of suffering creation.

QUESTION:- Dada, why is it that even though so many Gurus and Rishis and Saints have taken birth in India, there is so much of suffering in the country?

ANSWER:- It is because of the Rishis and Gurus and Saints that the people have the strength to accept suffering with a smile. They believe that suffering comes not without a purpose. It is not something to be shunned.

The emphasis in the teaching of the great spiritual leaders of India is not on the outer things of life, the glamour and greatness of the world, but on unfolding the inner powers, the *ātmā-shakti*. It is because of this *atma-shakti*, inner soul-power, that India has been able to ride many a storm and quell many a tempest of time and history. When all other ancient civilisations have perished, India alone lives on! India lives to give this great message to the nations of the world that true freedom is not in outer things, true freedom is of the Spirit. There can be no freedom without spirituality.

Prescription for Peace

QUESTION:- Is there a simple prescription for peace of

mind and happy living?

ANSWER:– Yes. Face life with faith. Know that there is a meaning of mercy in all that happens. Whatever comes from God is good. He cares for each one of us more than an earthly mother would care for her only child.

Beloved Dada [Sadhu Vaswani] said to us:–“God upsets our plans to set up His own! And His plans are perfect.” He also said:–“Every dis-appointment is His-appointment.” He who has such childlike trust in God always will be at peace, and will never come to grief.

QUESTION:– How to handle unpleasant situations in a loving way?

ANSWER:– Agree with the adversary,–as it is said. Do not resist anything. But move forward to greet every experience of life,–pleasant and unpleasant,–with the words:–“I accept! I accept!” As I have already said, in everything that happens, there is a meaning of God’s mercy. And everything that comes from God is good. Realising this, it will not be difficult for us to handle every situation in a loving way.

Parents and Children

QUESTION:– Here in the West, we find children drifting away from their parents. Is there a way in which family life may be kept intact? And what may we do to inculcate among the minds of children, born in the West, love for Indian Culture and Tradition?

ANSWER:– Here in the West, I find that the people are busy amassing wealth. Alas! they neglect their richest treasure. The children are our richest treasure.

I would place the following five-point programme before the parents:-

(1) Everyday, all the members of the family,—from the youngest to the eldest,—should spend a little time in prayer together. The family that prays together, stays together. At such sessions, a thought from a scripture or an inspirational book should be read, and each and every member should be asked to offer his or her reflections on the thought. This will give them a sense of involvement.

(2) The mother is the greatest influence in the life of a child, specially during the formative years, when he is best mouldable and impressionable. She should be a model for the children to follow, for it is in the home that habits are formed and character is made. The mother, by the shining example of her life, can infuse in the children love for Indian Tradition and Culture, so that the children know where their roots are. Therefore, it is incumbent that the mothers themselves are well-versed in the Indian Tradition.

(3) The father also has an important part to play. In spite of his pre-occupations, he must spend, everyday, as much time as possible with his children. In any case, he could take the family out on weekends and go out on a small holiday somewhere, at least once every six months.

(4) The T.V. has come to occupy a dominant place in the house. In all their free time, the children's eyes are glued to the T.V. screen. This has a harmful effect on their eyes, and the impact made by undesirable elements shown on the T.V. is indelible. Substitute the T.V. by some healthy and creative pastime for the children:

(5) Start weekly classes for the children where they could be introduced to and taught the essentials of India's deathless Culture. Such groups, if desired, may be named, "I

belong to India" groups, so that the children realise that although they stay in a land so far away from their homeland, they yet belong to India, and feel proud about being inheritors of a rich, immortal Culture and Tradition, which is regarded as the hope of the world.

QUESTION:- Dada, why don't parents allow their children to have dates?

ANSWER:- Let me answer your question by telling you a conversation I heard between a girl and her mother.

The girl said to her mother:-"Mummy, may I go out, this evening, with my boy friend?"

"No, my child," said the mother.

"Why, mummy, don't you trust me?"

"I do trust you, my child," said the mother.

"Then don't you trust my boy friend?"

"I do trust him," the mother said.

"Then what is the reason?" the girl asked.

And the mother said:-"I don't trust the two of you together!"

Yoga

QUESTION:- What is the purpose of Yoga?

ANSWER:- The literal meaning of the word "yoga" is "union". Union with what? Union with whom? We live in a world of separateness, and so are unhappy. We need a unifying vision of life.

We are come from a Divine Source. Coming here, we have built up an artificial world, a world of separateness, and so are unhappy. We cannot be happy, until we are re-united with the Divine.

How to be re-united with the Divine? To do my duty and, in the midst of difficulties and dangers, to have peace within me,— there is the way of Yoga. Storms may blow around me,— I yet retain inner peace, the rest of the soul.

Yoga is not running away from the world to the peak of a holy hill or to a forest of meditation. Yoga is to be *in* the world but not be *of* the world. Yoga is to stay in the world but not let worldliness stay within you.

QUESTION:— How may this be done, Dada?

ANSWER:— By entering into the depths within. The emphasis today is on widening the surface. Yoga teaches us to plumb the depths of life.

QUESTION:— What is the way to do this, Dada?

ANSWER:— The answer is in a few simple words:— Learn to concentrate and develop meditation. Meditation will take you deeper and deeper within yourself and, one day, you will know and you will understand.

THE GURU AND THE DISCIPLE

QUESTION:— Is it necessary to have a Guru?

ANSWER:— That is for each one of us to decide. For a man like me, who stumbles, again and again, as he moves on the Path, the Guru is as necessary as is water to the fish. Without the Guru where would I be?

It is said that if you want to be a thief, you must have a thief for a Guru [teacher]. If you want to be a gambler, you must receive training under an ace-gambler. How much more necessary it is to have a Guru if you want to live the life of the Spirit!

QUESTION:— Tell us something about your Guru.

ANSWER:— My revered Gurudeva, Beloved Dada [Sadhu Vaswani], was the very picture of love. The treasure of my life, he said, is love. Love flowed out of him in an endless stream. It drew many of us,—unworthy souls,—nearer to his lotus-feet. In the heart within, we adored him as our Guru.

But he refused to be called a Guru. "I am a Guru of no one," he said; "I am everyone's disciple!" His humility was so touching. He would not permit us to touch his feet. Before we could bow low to take the sacred dust of his feet, his hands were already on our feet! It was only at night, when he went to sleep, that I had an opportunity of kissing his holy feet.

QUESTION:— I understand that Sadhu Vaswani was a fine orator. He thrilled those that heard him. Is it necessary that the Guru should be a good speaker?

ANSWER:— The Guru is not a man of words. He is, essentially, an Awakener. We, most of us, are asleep in the slumber of the senses and the mind. We have identified ourselves with the bodies we wear. The Guru reveals to us the truth that we are not creatures of the earth, earthy. We are swan-birds of the soul. The Guru awakens us and teaches us to fly to the regions of the Spirit,—the Kingdom of Heaven that is within us, the Kingdom of Music and Light!

QUESTION:— What are the essential marks of a true Guru?

ANSWER:— The marks of a true Guru are many. He is, essentially, a man of Light. He dwells in the Light and the Light dwells within him. The word, Guru, is built up of two words, "gu" and "ru". "Gu" is "darkness", "ru" is "light". The Guru is one who takes us out of darkness into light. We are in the darkness of *avidya*, ignorance, duality. The Guru takes us out of this darkness into the Light of the One-in-all, the One that is All. That is a work which only the Guru can do.

The Guru is a man of many qualities. He is free from

sensuality : in him there is no drag of the flesh : he is a picture of purity. He is free from greed : he has no desire for wealth or worldly possessions. He does not seek earthly greatness : he does not even desire that his following should increase. In his heart there is no feeling of hatred or enmity towards anyone. He has conquered the weaknesses of the flesh and the mind. He has, specially, these three marks :— (1) love; (2) humility; and (3) wisdom.

Beloved Dada's love drew us as a magnet draws a needle. No one could resist the power of his love. His love flowed alike to saint and sinner, to friend and "foe". His humility defied description. It was the humility of one who had reduced himself to naught. "*Nāham! Nāham! Tuho! Tuho!*" he said, again and again. "I am nothing! Thou alone art, O Lord!" In his life, he revealed what it was to become nothing, no-thing. And as Jesus said:— "The empty alone are filled." Beloved Dada became empty, — of the self, the ego, — and the Lord filled him with His Love and Wisdom. He had the wisdom of the truly wise, the wisdom of those who had touched the root of life and unravelled the secrets of the Spirit. So it is, that he could express the most profound truths in a language so simple that even a child could understand.

QUESTION:— You spoke of the work which, you said, only the Guru could do. How does he go about doing that work? Is there anything that the Guru gives to the disciple?

ANSWER:— There is nothing that the Guru has to give us. For, everything is within us, already. God Himself is within everyone! What hides God from us is our little "ego". When it goes, God's light glows! And it is the constant endeavour of the Guru to destroy our "ego" which, in reality, has no

existence, but is a mere shadow. The Guru draws us to himself through the irresistible power of his love, – and then weans us from the “ego”. He takes up the *trisol* (the trident) and strikes the “ego”. In the process, the disciple may have to undergo great mental torture. Blessed is he who resists not, but surrenders himself at the lotus-feet of the Guru, saying :– “My body and my mind, all that I have and I offer unto thee! Do with me what thou wilt!”

Yogi Mahadev did not have disciples. To him there came, one day, a young man asking to be accepted as a disciple. The Yogi said to him:– “I will accept you on one condition. Go to yonder point where the mountain ends and jump down from the precipice.” The young man was staggered. “If I do that,” he said, “I shall die!” The Yogi smiled as he said:–“Unless you die, how can you be re-born?” The young man asked:– “If I die, who will become the disciple?” The Yogi answered:– “It is only when you die that you can receive the gift of the New Life.” “How is that?” asked the young man. And the Yogi said:– “You are a farmer. You know very well that until the grains of wheat die in the earth, they cannot yield a new crop.” The young man nodded, – and went away.

QUESTION:– How may I find a true Guru?

ANSWER:– When the disciple is ready, the Master appears. When the *chela* is ready, the Guru appears. This is a law of spiritual life. Let the seeker not go out in search of a Guru. Let him but aspire, and pray, – to be brought into contact with a true Guru, a Friend of God, one who has talked to God and walked with God and lives in constant communion with him. When his aspiration grows deep enough, sure as

the sun rises in the east, he will be brought into contact with such a one.

Sleep and meditation

QUESTION:– How long is it necessary for a seeker on the path to sleep?

ANSWER:– This must vary from individual to individual. There is a generalisation which says, six hours for a man, seven for a woman, if they are wise, and eight hours for one who is otherwise. Each one must decide, from his own experience and observation, how much sleep he needs. As a man's meditation grows deeper and deeper, he will find that he requires less hours of sleep.

QUESTION:– If I sleep less, and I sit in meditation, I feel drowsy and even go to sleep and dream.

ANSWER:– You must not sleep less but you must sleep well. Whatever work you do, you should do it, well. When you meditate, you should meditate. When you sleep, you should sleep. If when you get up from sleep and find that you are drowsy, it only means that you need more sleep. You should not meditate when you are feeling drowsy, because then you will not be able to meditate, you will vegetate. When you sit to meditate, you must have a feeling of freshness.

Why eat vegetables?

QUESTION:– Eating the flesh of animals and other food of violence is regarded as wrong, because we kill life. But there is life in vegetation and fruits, also?

ANSWER:— Nothing is without life. The One Life is in all,—in sand and stone, in stream and star, in sun and moon, in fruit and flower, in man and mineral, in bird and animal. In some, however, life is asleep: in others life doth dream: in yet others life hath begun to stir: in a few, only few, life is fully awake!

In minerals and in plants, in vegetables and in fruits, life doth slumber still. Different is the case with birds and animals. Like humans, they are five-sensed creatures. So it is that they feel the joy of living and the agony of dying. They have reached the stage of “duality”. They are sensitive to pleasure and pain. Like us, they, too, are moving on towards the goal: the goal is “unity”. Their way is long and laborious. We must help them in their onward march. Help them, and you will be helped! Hinder them, and you but raise obstacles in your own path!

On the earth-plane it is not possible to live a life of absolute non-violence. Even as I am speaking to you, I am killing germs floating on the atmosphere. The ideal is not of non-violence but minimum violence.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

QUESTION:— Do you believe in life after death?

ANSWER:— Ask me if I believe in death! No, I don't. There is no death! Death, like sunset, is only an illusion. What is sunset here is sunrise elsewhere. What is death here is birth elsewhere. In reality, there is no death!

QUESTION:— Will you kindly elaborate on this?

ANSWER:— Then let me tell you, death applies only to the body. I am not the body. The body is a garment: I am the wearer of the garment. The body drops down, but I continue to live. It is only because I am no longer in the physical body, which can be seen, touched, felt, perceived by our outer, physical senses, that people say, I have died. I can never die! I am immortal, immutable, eternal, deathless. In the words of the Bhagavad Gita, weapons cannot cleave us, fires cannot burn us, waters cannot wet us, and the winds cannot dry us away.

QUESTION:– Then why this fear of death? The whole world lives in mortal fear of death.

ANSWER:– Fear is due to lack of understanding. We live in fear of death, because we have not understood what death is. Once we realise that death is only an illusion, we shall not live in fear of death.

The child lives in fear of bogies. When he grows up, he finds that there are no bogies, and that his fear was unfounded. When we grow in the wisdom of life, we find that what we call death is just the process of dropping the physical body, the outer shell that I wear.

As soon as the physical body drops down, I find myself in another body which, for the sake of convenience, we may call the astral body. Right now, everyone of us is wearing more than one body. It is like a man wearing a shirt and a coat and an overcoat. If he puts off the overcoat, he does not change. He is the same man now seen in a coat.

Post-mortem meetings

QUESTION:– My father passed away two years ago, and my mother followed him after a year. Could my mother have met my father in the astral world? And will I meet them both, after I drop the physical body?

ANSWER:– Yes; normally, we meet our near and dear ones, after death. For, the period that elapses between the death of one physical body and the taking on of another physical body,—the period between what is called death and re-birth,—covers many, many years, according to the earth-calendar.

Suppose, someone has put off his physical body, today. A long time will elapse before he comes back to the

earth-plane, wearing another physical body. The journey after death and back to the earth, takes a sufficiently long period. During this period we all, who are living on earth, today, will have dropped our physical bodies and moved on to the astral world, where we shall meet our near and dear ones.

Re-incarnation

QUESTION:– What is re-incarnation, Dada?

ANSWER:– Re-incarnation is being re-born in another physical body. After what we call death, man lives for sometime in the astral and other worlds. Then the time comes for him to return to the physical world, and he takes on another physical body. This is re-incarnation.

We hear and read of children who remember specific details of their earlier births. Dr. Stevenson, who is working as a professor of Psychology in the University of Virginia, has studied hundreds of such cases of children who claim to remember details of their earlier lives. He has found that such children, between the ages of two and four, start to tell their parents that they remember having lived another life before.

QUESTION:– Can you give us an example?

ANSWER:– There is the famous case of Shanti Devi, a girl who was born in Delhi, in 1926. When she was three years old, she began to recall details of a former life she had lived at Mathura, about eighty miles away from Delhi. She said that she had been born there in 1902, was a Choban by caste and had married a cloth merchant, named Kedar Nath Chaubey. She gave birth to a son and, as a result, died ten days later.

When Shanti Devi was nine years old, her parents wrote to Mathura to find out if there was a cloth merchant there named Kedar Nath Chaubey. This person answered the letter and confirmed Shanti Devi's statements. He then sent a relative to her home and afterwards came himself. She immediately identified both of those persons.

The following year [1936], Shanti Devi was taken to Mathura and a Committee was appointed to note her reactions. As soon as she got down from the train at the Mathura railway station, she recognised a relative of Kedar Nath Chaubey, even though he was in the midst of a large crowd. She was then put in a carriage and the driver was asked to follow her directions. She seemed familiar with the town,—though this was the first time that she visited it in her new birth,—and led the driver to the house of Kedar Nath Chaubey. The house had been repainted a new colour, but she easily recognised it. Near the house was an old Brahmin: she identified him as Kedar Nath's father [i.e. her previous father-in-law].

Upon entering the house, she was asked a number of questions in regard to the arrangement of the rooms, closets, etc. She answered the questions correctly. She went to the house of her previous parents and identified them out of a crowd of over fifty persons.

Shanti Devi said that she had hid some money in another house, the one which was the house of Kedar Nath's parents. In this house, she pointed to a corner of one of the rooms as the place where she had buried the money. The place was dug but was found empty. Shanti Devi insisted that she had left money there and, eventually, Kedar Nath acknowledged that he had found and removed the money after his wife's death.

There are many cases of this type. Some of them have been examined by scientists. Several years ago, a book was published in America. If I remember aright, the title of the book was, *Twelve Cases of Re-incarnation Scientifically Examined*. The book is written by a team of scientists.

QUESTION:– If re-incarnation is a fact, why does Christianity not believe in it?

ANSWER:– A number of Christian groups, I am told, are beginning to believe in re-incarnation. The subject is being studied scientifically: and evidence in the favour of re-incarnation is growing.

You will remember there was a time when Christianity refused to believe that the earth was a spherical ball whirling in space around the sun. It was due to the work of Copernicus, Galileo and other scientists that Christianity finally accepted the truth.

Spirit-communication

QUESTION:– Is it proper to communicate with the dead?

ANSWER:– There is nothing wrong in communicating with the dead, provided we do it within limits. There are many who, at the death of their dear ones, feel disconsolate and want an assurance that their dear ones continue to live in the astral world and are happy. For such persons, it is alright if they communicate with the dead and get the assurance they need. But beyond this, they must not go. For, calling back the dead, repeatedly, disturbs them in the new world to which they have moved and prevents them from settling down to their new conditions.

I know of a mother who has an only son. She sent him to a boarding school. From there, she would send for him, again and again, and tell him, with tears in her eyes, how lonely she felt without him. The poor boy's condition was pitiable. While he was at the boarding house, his thoughts kept on moving to his lonely mother. He derived no joy from his new companions and sports. He could not even concentrate on his studies. The thought of his mother shedding tears haunted him.

If we keep on sending for our dear ones through mediums, we are acting as selfishly and foolishly as the mother of this boy. We must not forget that as soon as this life ends, another one begins: and they whom we think of as dead have their work to do in the new sphere to which they are called. We must do nothing to disturb them in their new work. Therefore, after contacting them once or twice, we should let them live their new life in peace.

QUESTION:— Can any and everyone communicate with the dead? Or is some training necessary?

ANSWER:— There are many who try to communicate with the dead without the help of a trained medium, and, in such cases, when we try to communicate with a dear one, it is likely that we will get into touch *not* with our dear one but with some one who is impersonating him. Cases of impersonation are not rare in the spirit world. There are many earth-bound spirits who are eager to have contact with those living on earth. Whenever they get a chance, they push their way and answer for spirits who may not be readily accessible.

Normally, the newly-dead are accessible to communicate. After a while,—and this may cover a period of some

months,—they move on to a higher plane where communication ceases to be possible. So, if you are seeking to communicate with someone who dropped his body quite sometime ago, it is likely that you will be answered by some earth-bound spirit trying to practise impersonation.

QUESTION:— Is there any harm in directly communicating with the dead through the planchette or by other means?

ANSWER:— There are people who, through planchette and other means, try to contact the dead directly, without the instrumentality of a trained medium. This may prove harmful. For, when you try to communicate with the dead, you open a door, and when you get up from your sittings, you must close the door behind you. This you do not know how to do, with the result that through the still open door many earth-bound spirits walk in and surround you. This can cause you great harm. If you are a medium, you must always work under a spirit guide who will, as soon as the communication is over, close the door on his side of the veil. If you work without the help and protection of such a spirit guide, you may, some day, find yourself in a difficult situation.

Astrology and Death

QUESTION:— Can astrology predict the exact time of death?

ANSWER:— The stars indicate: they do not compel. Astrology can only tell you the time when death is likely to occur. You must not forget that that which is threatened does not necessarily befall. Further, astrology is not like arithmetic. A sum in arithmetic can have only one answer. In

astrology, so many factors are involved that it is quite likely that the astrologer whom you have consulted has not considered all those factors, with the result that his calculations may be far from correct. Astrology is more of an art than a science, and much depends upon the astrologer who prepared your horoscope and who reads it.

Let me say, however, that in every horoscope there are periods indicated when death is likely to occur. And if you are fore-warned, you can be very careful and so can avoid death. I have known cases in which the faith and will-power of the person concerned, or someone close to him, have helped the person to tide over the crises. Once the period is crossed over, conditions become normal, until another such period enters your life.

Best way to die

QUESTION:- What is the best way to die?

ANSWER:- There are two types of death. There is the peaceful or natural way of dying; and there is the unpeaceful or unnatural way of dying. The best way to die is to die in a natural way. This occurs in a variety of ways.

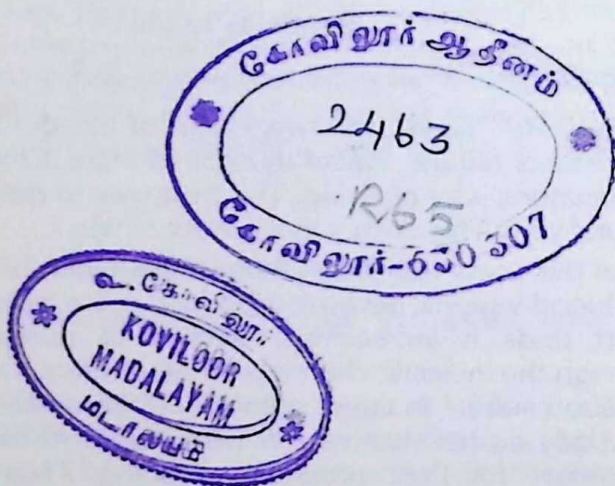
As the years roll on, as man grows older, his arteries, i.e. the blood vessels, become more and more inelastic; and the heart finds it increasingly difficult to pump the blood through the inelastic channels of the arteries. The circulation of blood suffers in consequence and the different organs of the body do not receive sufficient supply of blood which is necessary for their proper functioning. Thus one or the other organ of the body gets out of order, depriving the system of some essential product or service, which ultimately results in death of the body. This is a natural form

of death.

Another natural form of death is what is called cerebral haemorrhage. One of the smaller blood vessels in the brain becomes so weakened that, unable to cope with the pressure of the blood pumped by a still strong heart, it suddenly bursts. This is what is commonly called a stroke,—and is a natural form of death.

There is yet a third form of death. As the years roll on, the heart gradually becomes weaker, until it finally stops at the hour of lowest vitality, usually the small hours of the night. In such cases, the person dies in his sleep.

All these are natural forms of death and are the ones to be desired. But the best form of death is that in which a man dies with his mind fixed on the Lord, his heart filled with holy love, and his lips uttering the Name Divine.



AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE

J. P. VASWANI

Since the time of Socrates, the human propensity to raise questions has been the first step on the difficult and thorny path of self-knowledge. How? Why? Wherefore? Why not? Questions have constantly exercised man's Intelligence, underlining the fact that passive knowledge is not sufficient.

All of us raise questions, but there are few people who can provide us with satisfactory answers. We need someone to assuage our doubts, set our tormented minds at rest and clear the darkness that resides in our hearts?

In his wide ranging travels over the globe, Dada J. P. Vaswani has come to the aid of thousands of such seekers after Truth. Instinctively, people have turned to him for enlightenment on matters spiritual and temporal, issues human and divine, problems specific and universal....

With his lively, twinkling sense of humour, Dada provides answers to numerous queries that have constantly haunted us. With a story here, an anecdote there, with a suggestion here and a tip there, Dada shows us the way out of Ignorance to the path of knowledge.

If you have been torn by doubt, if your questions have remained unanswered, peep into the pages of this book and you will surely find answers to your questions.